

## Unit 3. The Desktop (I)

**The Desktop** is the on-screen work area on which windows appear, it's the first screen that appears when the operating system has initialized. In our case it will be the Windows XP desktop.

This desktop is very similar to other operating systems from Windows such Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, Windows 2000,...

If you are not familiar with any of the above mentioned operating systems do not worry. We will explain what makes up these systems and what function each part serves.

### Get to know the Desktop of Windows XP

Once Windows XP has initialized, the following screen will appear. It is possible that it is not the same as the one on your computer because Windows allows us to customize the background. This will be discussed later on.



On the desktop we have icons that allow us to open the corresponding program.

For example, by clicking on the icon  Internet Explorer will open up.

Later on we will discuss how to create and organize the icons on the desktop, we will also discuss

how to change the background.

## The Bars and Start Button



**Task Bar.** The task bar is what appears on the bottom of the screen. On the bottom left corner there is the **Start** button. Next we have the area for shortcuts, then the programs running, and lastly the **notification area**.

● The **Start** Button is the button through which we can access the entire breadth of options that Windows XP offers us. If we browse it, a menu similar to the one below will be displayed.



On the top we can find the name of the current user. In this case it is *aulaClic*.

On the middle part there are two areas:

The left area contains three separate areas divided by a thin line.

On the top third we can see **Internet Explorer** and **Outlook Express**. They are located here because these are programs included with WindowsXP. On the next third we find all the programs that we have been using lately. In this example, MSN, Windows Media Player, ... This way we have quicker access to the programs that we most frequently use.

To gain access to the rest of the programs we have the green triangle **All programs**. By clicking here, we can view all of the programs that are installed on our computer.

On the right hand area there are icons to access the different parts of WindowsXP that are most often

used: **My documents, My Recent Documents, My Pictures, My Music and My Computer.**

With the **Control Panel** icon we can configure and customize the appearance of our computer.

If we have any questions we can use the **Help and Support** that Windows offers us.

With the **Search** icon we can find files whose location we are not sure of.

The option **Run** allows us to directly execute certain commands, for example to execute a specific


program, etc...


At the bottom we have the options **Log Off** and **Turn Off Computer**. The first option allows us to close the current session, and the second option allows us to restart or turn off our computer.


### ● The shortcuts area.

Contains icons that are used to access a particular program quickly. To place an icon here, simply drag it from the desktop. These icons are shortcuts that we can create, as we will see on the following page.

To execute, simply click on the icon.

The icon  represents the desktop. It is used to minimize the windows that are opened to access the desktop easier.

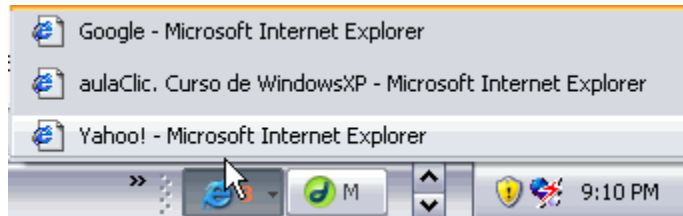
The icon  represents Internet Explorer. It is used to quickly access Internet.

The icon  represents Windows Explorer. It is used to quickly access files and folders.

### ● Open programs.

In this area we can see the buttons of the programs that are currently open and two small arrows pointing up and down. If the button is slightly darker it means that it is the button of the program that we are working with. By clicking on each button we find ourselves in the respective program.

When there are several programs opened at the same time they are grouped under a button. For example, if we have several windows of Internet Explorer opened or several programs with files. By clicking, a window will choose to open one of them. In this case we choose between the three Internet pages shown.



Further to the right, as in the example above, two black arrows help us to navigate the buttons in the event that we are working with many windows and they do not all fit on the task bar.

### ● The notification area.

This area contains icons that represent the programs that start up automatically when the computer is turned on as well as other information. In this case about automatic updates and about the antivirus program.

If a round button appears, this allows us to expand or shrink the area that contains the icons of these programs. The time also appears here. If you wish to open them simply double-click on the icon.